

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 /078 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3220
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02661

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV UK RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRITISH REACTION TO SALISBURY
ANNOUNCEMENT

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. THE FEBRUARY 15 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SALISBURY HAS
ALREADY SET OFF A CHARGED POLITICAL DEBATE HERE. THE
PRESS HAS LARGELY REACTED ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES AND
HAS NOTED THE APPARENT DIFFERENCES IN OFFICIAL STATE-
MENTS IN LONDON AND WASHINGTON. THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
AND DAILY MAIL ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMED THE SALISBURY
ANNOUNCEMENT. THE TELEGRAPH, REFERRING TO DAVID OWEN,
SAYS "HE GOES ON MOBILISING THE WORLD AGAINST THE TRUE
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AND PEACEFUL LEADERS OF THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE AND
AGAINST THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY AGREEMENT THEY (THE
INTERNAL PARTIES) MAY NEVERTHELESS SUCCEED IN REACHING,
HOWEVER DEMOCRATIC. NOW THAT AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT
SEEMS SO CLOSE, ALL THIS IS EVEN MORE OBVIOUSLY A
FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF SELF-DETERMINATION, HUMAN RIGHTS
AND BRITISH AND WESTERN INTERESTS. SALISBURY MUST NOW

BE THE POINT OF APPLICATION OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE."

2. THE TIMES, WHILE MORE RESTRAINED, EDITORIALIZES THAT "THE FIRST REPORTS OF THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT SUGGEST THAT IT IS FULLY WITHIN THE SIX PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN AS CONDITIONS FOR BRITISH ACCEPTANCE", A REFERENCE TO NIBMAR. THE TIMES CONCLUDES: "IF THE ESSENTIALS OF MAJORITY RULE, RECONCILIATION AND AN END TO RACE DISCRIMINATION ARE THERE, THEN WHOEVER MAY DEMUR, IT MUST NOT BE BRITAIN...BRITAIN MUST SMOOTH (THE ROAD AHEAD) AS MUCH AS LIES IN HER POWER."

3. THE GUARDIAN IS CAREFUL NOT TO CHEER THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND POINTS OUT THAT A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED. IT SUGGESTS HOWEVER THAT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN TASK IS TO BRING NKOMO INTO THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT. THE FINANCIAL TIMES DOES NOT COMMENT EDITORIALY, BUT A COLUMN BY BRIGIT BLOOM, AFTER REVIEWING THE STATUS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES, CONCLUDES: "THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS HIGHLY CAUTIOUS IN ITS REACTION LAST NIGHT TO THE NEWS FROM SALISBURY, ALTHOUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON DECLARED THAT IT APPEARS TO BE UNACCEPTABLE SINCE IT DID NOT INCLUDE THE PATRIOT FRONT. IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF, IN THE END, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DIFFERED FROM THIS VIEW, FOR UNLESS

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THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS INCLUDED, THE WAR WILL NOT STOP AND THIS SETTLEMENT WILL THUS BE MEANINGLESS."

4. THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, JOHN DAVIES, LAST NIGHT CALLED THE ANNOUNCEMENT "AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD". HE ADDED THAT, "IT IS NOW NECESSARY TO DEMONSTRATE CONVINCINGLY THAT THE TERMS OF THIS SETTLEMENT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE, BLACK AND WHITE ALIKE". END UNCLASSIFIED

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5. THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE ALREADY TABLED QUESTIONS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO ANSWER IN PARLIAMENT THIS AFTERNOON. CALLAGHAN HAS BEEN ADVISED TO ASSUME A LOW-KEY, CAUTIOUS ROLE, POINTING OUT THAT HMG HAS NO OFFICIAL REPORT OF WHAT HAS BEEN AGREED, NOTHING HAS BEEN SIGNED, AND A NUMBER OF ISSUES REMAIN TO BE COVERED. HE WILL REITERATE THAT HMG REQUIRES A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER TO MAJORITY RULE THROUGH FREE ELECTIONS. THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION IS LIKELY TO BE STORMY.

6. RICHARD LUCE, DEPUTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN FOR
THE TORIES, CALLED EMBASSY OFFICER FEB 16 TO CONVEY

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INFORMALLY THE CONSERVATIVE VIEW THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN
SALISBURY ARE POSITIVE AND THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S
APPARENT REJECTION IS CONSIDERED "UNHELPFUL". HE SAID
MRS. THATCHER AND MR. DAVIES BELIEVE THAT, DESPITE
THE INCOMPLETENESS OF THE AGREEMENT, EVERY EFFORT MUST
NOW BE MADE TO "FACILITATE" PROGRESS AND TO GET THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT TO JOIN. THE CONSERVATIVES, LUCE SAID
BELIEVE THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT BROADLY SATISFIES THE
BASIC REQUIREMENTS AND THAT THE CALLAGHAN GOVERNMENT
CANNOT REACT WITH APPARENT INDIFFERENCE. EMBASSY
OFFICER URGED CAUTION IN THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION TO
THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT, SAYING MUCH REMAINS TO BE
AGREED AND IMPLEMENTED, AND SUGGESTING THAT AN AGREE-
MENT WHICH RESULTS IN AN INTERNATIONALIZED CIVIL WAR

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IS IN NOBODY'S INTEREST.

7. COMMENT: CONSERVATIVES RECOGNIZE THAT THE "SIXTH PRINCIPLE"--ACCEPTANCE BY THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA--HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THEY ARE PRIVATELY URGING MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE TO CONDUCT AN AFRICAN REFERENDUM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS, THE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SALISBURY HAS PROBABLY DRIVEN A WEDGE INTO THE ESSENTIAL BIPARTISANSHIP THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED BRITISH POLICY ON RHODESIA OVER MORE THAN A DECADE. CALLAGHAN AND OWEN ARE IN FOR A HARD TIME IN BOTH PARLIAMENT AND PRESS.

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